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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6167

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECSTION 1 OF 4 ROME 12321

LIMDIS

POUCHED TO: MOSCOW, MADRID, PARIS, LONDON, BONN, FLORENCE,
GENOA, MILAN, NAPLES, PALERMO, TRIESTE, TURIN.

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, IT, US, UR
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH SENIOR COMMUNIST OFFICIAL

SUMMARY. EMBOFF MET WITH ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI)
SECRETARIAT MEMBER GIANCARLO PAJETTA IN LOCAL RESTAURANT
JULY 22 FOR FIRST CONTACT AT THIS LEVEL OF THE PARTY.
PAJETTA MADE A PITCH FOR GREATER AMERICAN PRAGMATISM IN
TERMS OF RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF THE PCI IN CONTEMPORARY
ITALIAN POLITICAL LIFE AND CRITICIZED THE FAILURE OF THE
AMBASSADOR TO CALL ON PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY BERLINGUER IN
THE COURSE OF PAYING VISITS TO THE SECRETARIES OF ALL
THE OTHER PARTIES OF THE SO-CALLED CONSTITUTIONAL ARC.
EMBOFF REITERATED US POLICY OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN
ITALIAN AFFAIRS BUT STRESSED THAT WE DO NOT INTEND TO
TAKE ANY ACTIONS WHICH COULD POSSIBLY BE INTERPRETED
OR MISINTERPRETED AS CONVEYING AMERICAN APPROVAL FOR
PCI ENTRY INTO AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. REGARDING HIS
RECENT VISIT TO MOSCOW, PAJETTA SAID HE FOUND THE
SOVIETS PERPLEXED BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, ALTHOUGH
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HE JUDGED THEIR FAILURE TO DRAW A FINAL CONCLUSION
ON THE SUBJECT AS A POSITIVE SIGN FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF
FORWARD MOVEMENT IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS IN THE FUTURE.
HE SUGGESTED THAT THE AMERICAN INSISTENCE ON HUMAN
RIGHTS COULD DAMAGE THE DETENTE PROCESS AND STATED
THAT WITH PROGRESS ON DETENTE PROSPECTS FOR GREATER
HUMAN RIGHTS IN EASTERN EUROPE WOULD INCREASE. EMBOFF

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NOTED THAT HUMAN RIGHTS AND DETENTE ARE SEPARATE
ISSUES WHICH SHOULD HAVE MOMENTUM OF THEIR OWN, AND
STRESSED THAT THE US COMMITMENT TO DETENTE REMAINS
FIRM AND THAT WE INTEND TO WORK FOR A SUCCESSFUL
BELGRADE REVIEW CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

1. AS A FIRST STEP IN THE EMBASSY'S PRUDENT AND
GRADUAL EFFORT TO EXPAND CONTACTS WITH PCI OFFICIALS,
EMBOFF MET JULY 22 WITH PCI SECRETARIAT MEMBER GIANCARLO
PAJETTA, WHO AS OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOREIGN
RELATIONS OF THE PARTY. ENCOUNTER TOOK PLACE IN LOCAL
RESTAURANT ALTHOUGH PAJETTA HAD INITIALLY SUGGESTED
THAT FOR PROTOCOL REASONS MEETING SHOULD TAKE PLACE
IN HIS OFFICE, POINTING OUT, INTER ALIA, THAT HE
NORMALLY RECEIVED AMBASSADORS AND NOT FIRST SECRETARIES.
PAJETTA WAS JOINED AT THE LUNCHEON BY DIRECTORATE
MEMBER BARCA WITH WHOM EMBOFF HAS HAD CONTACT IN THE
PAST.

2. PAJETTA'S PRINCIPAL PITCH, WHICH DOMINATED THE
LUNCHEON CONVERSATION, WAS THE NEED FOR SUBSTANTIALLY
GREATER AMERICAN PRAGMATISM IN DEALING WITH THE ITALIAN
POLITICAL SITUATION. IN HIS VIEW, THE POLICIES OF THE
USG ARE HEAVILY CONDITIONED BY PREJUDICES OF THE PAST
WHICH PREVENT IT FROM DEALING WITH THE COMMUNIST ISSUE
IN A MANNER WHICH WOULD BE IN ITS OWN LONG RANGE
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INTERESTS.

3. FROM THE ONSET, PAJETTA SHARPLY CRITICIZED QUOTE
THE GAFFE END QUOTE OF THE AMBASSADOR IN NOT CALLING
UPON PARTY SECRETARY BERLINGUER AFTER HE HAD
DEMONSTRATIVELY CALLED UPON THE SECRETARIES OF THE
OTHER PARTIES OF THE SO-CALLED CONSTITUTIONAL ARC.
PAJETTA TERMED IT UNBELIEVABLE THAT THE AMBASSADOR
HAD HEEDED THE ADVICE OF HIS ASSISTANTS NOT TO
CALL ON BERLINGUER WHEN HE HAD CALLED UPON LIBERAL
PARTY SECRETARY ZANONE WHO DOES NOT REPRESENT A VIABLE
POLITICAL FORCE. THIS TYPE OF BEHAVIOR, ALSO FOLLOWED
BY THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR WHO IS QUOTE POORLY EDUCATED
END QUOTE, CONSTITUTES A FORM OF INTERFERENCE IN
ITALIAN AFFAIRS, AND PAJETTA SAID THE PCI HAD REACTED
MODERATELY IN NOT MAKING A PUBLIC ISSUE OF THE
AMERICAN BEHAVIOR. HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT HE HAD
PERSONALLY RAISED IT IN THE WAY OF A PROTEST WITH
FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI WHO SHRUGGED IT OFF AS QUOTE
WELL, YOU KNOW THOSE AMERICANS END QUOTE.

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LIMDIS

4. CONTINUING, PAJETTA ASKED WHETHER THE AMERICANS WERE GOING TO MISS THE TRAIN. ITALIAN POLITICAL REALITY HAS CHANGED, AND PAJETTA ACCUSED THE USG OF HAVING FAILED TO UNDERSTAND THIS. HE ASKED RATHER ARROGANTLY QUOTE WILL YOU ONLY DECIDE TO MAKE A CALL UPON US AFTER WE ARE IN PALAZZO CHIGI (THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE)? END QUOTE. AS PROOF THAT THE PCI REALLY COUNTS IN THE RUNNING OF THE COUNTRY TODAY, HE NOTED THAT HE HAD BRIEFED PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI ON HIS RECENTLY COMPLETED VISIT TO MOSCOW AND THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD CONSULTED WITH HIM SEVERAL TIMES REGARDING HIS THEN FORTHCOMING TRIP TO WASHINGTON.

5. EMBOFF RESPONDED TO PAJETTA BY REITERATING THE THREE BASIC POINTS OF AMERICAN POLICY TOWARDS ITALY, NON-INTERFERENCE, NON-INDIFFERENCE, AND PREFERENCE FOR PARTIES SHARING THE SAME BASIC PRINCIPLES. HE SUGGESTED THAT THIS IS A REALISTIC POLICY WHICH TAKES INTO COMPLETE ACCOUNT ALL THE FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL SCENE. HE NOTED WE RECOGNIZE THE PCI AS AN IMPORTANT POLITICAL FORCE IN ITALY. REGARDING CALLS ON PARTY SECRETARIES, HE TOLD PAJETTA THAT CONTRARY TO WHAT SOME OF HIS PARTY COLLEAGUES WERE SAYING, THE CONFIDENTIAL

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AMBASSADOR HAD BEEN FOLLOWING PAST PRACTICE WHEN HE

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CALLED ON THE SECRETARIES OF OTHER PARTIES, INCLUDING
THE LIBERALS, AND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN WRONG TO EXPECT
THE AMBASSADOR TO MAKE A MOVE WHICH WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY
BE INTERPRETED AND EXPLOITED BY THE PCI AND ITS
SUPPORTERS IN THE PRESS AS A STAMP OF AMERICAN APPROVAL
FOR THE PARTY.

6. WITH REFERENCE TO THE FACT THAT THE PCI HAD CHOSEN
NOT TO MAKE A PUBLIC ISSUE OF THE AMBASSADOR'S FAILURE
TO CALL ON BERLINGUER, EMBOFF SAID IT PROBABLY WOULD
NOT HAVE BEEN IN THE PARTY'S INTEREST TO DO SO IN
ANY EVENT SINCE IT WOULD HAVE CONFIRMED CONTINUED
AMERICAN PREFERENCE FOR A NON-COMMUNIST SOLUTION TO
THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL PROBLEMS. PAJETTA INTERJECTED
TO SAY QUOTE YOU ARE EXACTLY RIGHT; WE ARE NOT PREPARED
TO GIVE ANY PROPAGANDA PRESENTS TO YOU. END QUOTE.
EMBOFF RESPONDED THAT THIS CONFORMED EXACLY TO USG
POLICY, TO WIT THAT THE ITALIAN PEOPLE COULD AND
SHOULD MAKE THEIR CHOICE FREELY, BUT WE ARE NOT GOING
TO DO ANYTHING WHICH COULD BE VIEWED AS GIVING A SEAL
OF APPROVAL OR BLESSING TO THE PCI. AS FOR THE TRAIN
WHICH MIGHT DEPART WITHOUT THE AMERICANS, EMBOFF
COMMENTED THAT HE FELT THAT IT WOULD, IN THE FINAL
ANALYSIS, WAIT FOR THE AMERICANS. TO THE RETORT THAT
IN THAT CASE THE TRAIN WOULD THEN LEAVE LATE, EMBOFF
SAID THAT THIS MIGHT BE TRUE BUT LITTLE DAMAGE WOULD
BE DONE.

7. PAJETTA ALSO CRITICIZED WHAT HE PERCEIVED AS
THE AMERICAN EFFORT TO PASS MESSAGES TO PCI HEADQUARTERS
THROUGH INDIVIDUAL PCI PARLIAMENTARIANS WHO VISIT
THE US IN A PRIVATE CAPACITY (OBVIOUSLY REFERRING
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TO THE RECENT VISIT OF ON. LIBERTINI) OR DURING CALLS
ON LOCAL COMMUNIST ELECTED OFFICIALS (REFERRING PRIMARILY
TO THE AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON MAYOR GABBUGGIANI OF
FLORENCE). EMBOFF RESPONDED THAT WE WERE UNDERTAKING
NO SUCH EFFORT, SINCE WE FIND THAT WE HAVE AN
EXISTING CHANNEL HERE IN ROME THAT EACH SIDE CAN USE
TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE OTHER.

8. EMBOFF ASKED PAJETTA WHY THE PCI SEEMED TO BE
MAKING SUCH A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO OBTAIN AMERICAN
ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL. HE NOTED THAT BOTH L'UNITA
AND THAT PORITION OF THE PRESS SYMPATHETIC TO THE LEFT
IN GENERAL AND THE PCI IN PARTICULAR HAS OVER THE LAST
FEW YEARS GONE OUT OF THE WAY TO MISINTERPRET AMERICAN
ACTIONS TO IMPLY A CHANGED USG ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE
PCI. AS THE MOST RECENT EXAMPLE, HE POINTED TO THE

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ARTICLE IN L'UNITA ON JULY 20 REGARDING THE AMBASSADOR'S
CALL ON FLORENCE MAYOR GABBUGGIANI WHICH WAS PLAYED AS BIG
AS THE STORY ON FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI'S VISIT TO
LISBON WHICH WAS THEN UNDERWAY. HE SAID THERE WAS NO
COMPARISON IN TERMS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EVENT,
YET THE VERY PLAY GAVE MUCH MORE WEIGHT TO THE AMBASSADOR'S
VISIT. PAJETTA SAID THAT THE EXAMPLE SHOWED HOW
ABSURD AND OUT OF TOUCH WITH EVENTS THE AMERICANS ARE WHEN
THE READ L'UNITA AS THEY WOULD PRAVDA; HE HAD
ALREADY HEARD OF THIS EXAMPLE AS EMBOFF HAD
MENTIONED IT AT RECEPTION PREVIOUS EVENING TO ANOTHER
PCI OFFICIAL AND THE LATTER HAD MENTIONED IT IN THE SECRETARIAT
AS A JOKE THAT VERY MORNING. A FEW MINUTES LATER
WHEN PAJETTA MENTIONED HE HAD CAREFULLY POSITIONED
A STORY IN L'UNITA ABOUT A MEETING BETWEEN A PCI
OFFICIAL AND CZECHOSLOVAK EXILE MLYNAR, EMBOFF QUICKLY
POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE CONTRADICTIONS IN PAJETTA'S
ARGUMENTS.

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LIMDIS

9. DURING THE CONVERSATION, EMBOFF SUGGESTED THAT THE
PCI HAS A LONG WAY TO GO IF IT IS TO CONVINCE USG
THAT IT TRULY INTENDS TO FOLLOW A POLICY WHICH IS
NEITHER ANTI-AMERICAN NOR ANTI-SOVIET. FROM L'UNITA
PRESS PLAY, TO STATEMENTS SUCH AS THAT MADE BY DIRECTORATE
MEMBER PECCHIOLI REGARDING ALLEGED US INTELLIGENCE INVOLVEMENT
IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN ITALY, TO STATEMENTS
MADE TO THE AMBASSADOR BY LOCAL PCI OFFICIALS, THERE
WAS AMPLE EVIDENCE THAT THE PCI IS NOT BEING BALANCED
IN ITS TREATMENT OF THE US. THE PROBLEM, HE ADDED,
BECOMES MORE ACUTE WHEN IT COMES FROM A SENIOR PARTY

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OFFICIAL OR THE OFFICIAL PARTY ORGAN SINCE THEY SHOULD
BE TAKING THE LEAD IN SETTING AN EXAMPLE OF BALANCE FOR THE BASE
OF THE PARTY WHICH QUITE UNDERSTANDABLY IS MORE CON-
SERVATIVE THAN THE LEADERSHIP.

10. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, PAJETTA SAID HE FOUND
THE SOVIETS, DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO MOSCOW,
GENUINELY PERPLEXED BY THE BEHAVIOR OF THE CARTER
ADMINISTRATION. HE JUDGEDTHEIR FAILURE TO DRAW
A FINAL CONCLUSION ON THE SUBJECT AS A POSITIVE SIGN
FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE, FORWARD MOVEMENT IN
US-SOVIET RELATIONS, GIVEN GOOD WILL ON BOTH SIDES.
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HE SUGGESTED THAT US INSISTENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
QUESTIONS POSES A THREAT TO THE DETENTE PROCESS,
ARGUING THAT IF DETENTE IS ALLOWED TO BLOOM, THERE
WOULD BE AN IMPORVEMENT IN HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS
IN THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE.

11. EMBOFF RESPONDED THAT HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN IS
NOT DIRECTED AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION AS PRESIDENT
CARTER HAS POINTED OUT. HE ADDED HE FOUND IT
INTERESTING THAT INDIVIDUAL PARLIAMENTARIANS ELECTED
ON PCI TICKETS FIND IT USEFUL TO INVOKE THE HUMAN RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN IN ASKING THE USG THROUGH THIS EMBASSY TO
INTERVENE ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN CHILE,
ARGENTINA, AND SOUTH KOREA, WHILE THE PARTY QUESTIONS THE
VALIDITY OF THE US COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS AS IT AFFECTS
THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES. PAJETTA INTERRUPTED TO SAY THAT THE
USG HAD TROUBLE GIVING HUMAN RIGHTS LESSONS AFTER WHAT
HAD HAPPENED IN VIETNAM AND CHILE. HE OBSERVED THAT
ITALY HAS HAD TO ACCEPT LARGE NUMBERS OF CHILEAN
REFUGEES AS A RESULT OF THE SITUATION WHICH THE USG
HAD HELPED TO CREATE IN CHILE. EMBOFF RESPONDED THAT
THE NEED TO GO INTO EXILE FOR POLITICAL REASONS IS
NEVER AGREEABLE AND THAT NO NATION HAS AN ENTIRELY
CLEAR RECORD IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD. HE OBSERVED
THAT AS A RESULT OF SOVIET ACTIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE
SINCE WORLD WAR II WE HAD FELT OBLIGED TO ACCEPT
HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES FROM THOSE COUNTRIES,
A POINT WHICH THE PCI SEEMED TO MANAGE NEATLY TO FORGET.
AS FOR PAJETTA'S LINKING HUMAN RIGHTS AND DETENTE,
EMBOFF EXPRESSED OUR BELIEF THAT THESE ARE SEPARATE
ISSUES WHICH HAVE THEIR OWN DYNAMISM AND MOMENTUM.
ACCORDINGLY, ONE SHOULD NOT BE MADE DEPENDENT ON THE
OTHER.
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12. AS FOR DETENTE, EMBOFF STRESSED THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION REMAINED COMMITTED TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS, SUGGESTING THAT PAJETTA MIGHT WANT TO READ CAREFULLY THE SPEECH THE PRESIDENT HAD JUST DELIVERED IN CHARLESTON. THE US ALSO INTENDS TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ASSURE THAT POSITIVE RESULTS ARE ACHIEVED AT BELGRADE. HOWEVER, HE CHALLENGED PAJETTA'S SUGGESTION THAT THE REVIEW CONFERENCE FOCUS ALL ITS ATTENTION ON THE SEARCH FOR WAYS FOR FUTURE COOPERATION NEGLECTING, AS EMBOFF POINTED OUT, TO EXAMINE ALSO AREAS WHERE OBLIGATIONS UNDERTAKEN AT HELSINKI HAD NOT BEEN KEPT. AS PROOF OF THE POSITIVE APPROACH THE USG TAKES TOWARDS THE BELGRADE REVIEW CONFERENCE, EMBOFF POINTED TO THE CONSTRUCTIVE, NON-POLEMICAL STANCE WHICH THE AMERICAN DELEGATION HAS TAKEN AT THE PRESENT PREPARATORY CONFERENCE. WHILE TALKING ABOUT BELGRADE, PAJETTA

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LIMDIS

NOTED THAT IT WAS USEFUL THAT THE USG HAD ISSUED A VISA TO PERMIT A L'UNITA CORRESPONDENT TO OPEN AN OFFICE IN THE US SINCE CONTINUED FAILURE TO TAKE SUCH A STEP WOULD HAVE OBLIGED THE PCI TO URGE THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT TO RAISE THE MATTER AT BELGRADE. AS IT WAS, THE PCI HAD ASKED ANDREOTTI TO RAISE THE SUBJECT DURING HIS WASHINGTON TRIP, ALTHOUGH EVENTS HAD OVERTAKEN THE NECESSITY TO DO THIS.

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13. BEFORE CONCLUDING CONVERSATION, PAJETTA SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO ANOTHER EXCHANGE OF VIEWS FOLLOWING THE VACATION PERIOD. HE HINTED THAT HE HOPED THESE MEETINGS WOULD EVENTUALLY LEAD TO AN ELEVATION OF THE LEVEL OF CONTACTS BETWEEN THE PCI AND THE EMBASSY, INCLUDING A POSSIBLE ENCOUNTER INVOLVING THE AMBASSADOR. EMBOFF REPLIED THAT HE WELCOMED FUTURE PRIVATE MEETINGS, BUT COULD NOT HOLD OUT HOPE FOR ANY MAJOR INCREASE IN THE LEVEL ATWHICH THEY OCCURRED.

14. COMMENT. PAJETTA IS A TOUGH, BUT WITTY INTER-LOCUTOR. HE IS ARTICULATE, DIRECT TO THE POINT OF BEING BITING IN HIS CRITICISM, AND HARD DRIVING ON QUESTIONS IN WHICH HE IS DIRECTLY INTERESTED. THE CONFIDENTIAL

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POINT THAT CLEARLY CAME THROUGH IS THE DEGREE OF PCI SENSITIVITY OVER WHAT THE COMMUNISTS PERCEIVE TO BE THE FAILURE OF THE USG TO GIVE THEM THE RESPECT WHICH THEY NOW FEEL IS THEIR DUE FOLLOWING THEIR RECENT ELECTORATE SUCCESSES.HOLMES

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